COMPREHENSIVE MANPOWER MOBILITY PROGRAM

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January 21, 1970

COMPREHENSIVE MANPOWER MOBILITY PROGRAMS

Introduction

One of the major problems in many rural areas is that there are too few employment opportunities for the number of people potentially in the labour force. This problem can be attacked in two ways. One alternative is to increase employment opportunities in rural areas by bringing in new industry or enlarging industries which are already operating. The second alternative is to increase mobility possibilities for people in these areas. These alternatives are not independent of each other. Individual possesses and a large part of any mobility program is enabling people to acquire saleable skills (i.e. retraining). If any new industry is brought into an area, it will probably require skills not possessed by people in the area and some retraining is involved. If a person cannot find work in the vicinity of his residence, then he must move and to increase the chances of his move being successful, he will probably need some measure of retraining. Thus, a manpower program is at the core of any development program in rural areas.

Elements of the Program

A comprehensive manpower mobility program includes the basic elements of recruitment, intake, evaluation, basic education, pre-vocational training, skill training, placement, follow-up, supporting services, job development, and program evaluation.

Recruitment refers to programs and activities designed to bring about an awareness on the part of individuals that there are programs available to help them improve their occupational position and create a desire to make use of these services. People are sometimes aware of a program insofar as realizing that it exists, but may not understand how the program could relate to their situation. Information on manpower mobility assistance must be made meaningful to the people who are to make use of the services offered. This may be done through many of the traditional methods such as media advertising, printed brochures and public meetings, but these methods only reach a part of the population needing the services. These methods need to be supplemented by

personal contact, home visits, community leader involvement and agency referrals.

Intake refers to the initial application and interview. It is at this interview that the applicant makes his initial judgement as to the helpfulness of such a program in his own particular situation. The applicant should feel that he is dealing with a person, on an individual basis, who is interested in his welfare, and not with an impersonal, uninterested bureaucracy. At this point, the applicant should gain a positive attitude toward committing himself to changing his own situation and also the family should begin to be involved so that all can understand and support the changes which will be made in their way of life. If home visitors have not been involved prior to this time, they could begin to work with the family to provide information and emotional support and to act as liason between the program counsellor and the family.

Individual and family needs and aptitude evaluation are assessed in the counselling testing and program planning procedures. Each individual who enters a comprehensive manpower program should have a program designed for him which will fit all of his needs and make best use of his abilities. Although, it is generally the husband who receives the retraining or the new job, it is the family unit that is affected by these changes and therefore it is the family unit which must be considered is the adjustment if the applicant is to be successful. The evaluation stages must take into consideration the desires of the applicant, his aptitudes, work experience, and education as well as his family's desires, aspirations, needs in terms of housing, food, health, etc., and the family's support to the applicant's plans. The applicant should have access to a full range of aptitude tests, counselling and guidance services, and the family should be involved in many of the counselling sessions. An individual program needs to be designed to fit the individual and family needs of each applicant. This stage of the program ends when the applicant has a program designed to fit all of his individual and family needs and the doors have been opened to his participation in the various parts of the program.

In designing an individual program, some or all of the elements described below may be used. The program should be flexible enough so that the needs of the individuals and families are filled and the consideration of administrative efficiency comes second. This type of program assumes that if individual mobility is improved, improvements will result in the regional economy and in social conditions in the region.

Basic education refers to those academic skills which are necessary for any advancement in our technological society. These include a minimum proficiency in reading, writing, speech and mathematics. These skills are generally acquired as children in the school system, but frequently, people have not had enough schooling to give them the minimum proficiency required to enter training programs or to qualify for jobs other than common labour. The wife in the family may also need some additional academic skills so that she can make a successful adjustment to a new environment.

Pre-vocational training involves academic programs leading to a specific vocational goal. Most vocational or technical programs have some prerequisite in terms of education and it is the intent of this part of the program to enable the applicant to acquire this training. This part of the program can also include some work habits and basic work skills programs such as a job-corps* program.

Vocational, technical and academic training come under the general heading of skill training. The type of training which the applicant should receive should depend upon his desires, capabilities and aptitudes.

Placement is probably one of the most important parts of the program. It involves locating potential jobs and assisting the applicant to obtain a job which meets with his abilities, aptitudes and desires. This placement agency must develop a system of rapid communication with prospective employers, and prospective employees. The object of a placement service is to place every applicant in a job and not simply to fill the jobs that are vacant at that particular time. The placement service should place at least as much emphasis on the needs of the employee as upon the needs of employers.

Follow-up procedures refer to those activities which provide the necessary support and counselling to ensure that a new employee makes a successful adjustment to his new work situation. This involves continued counselling of the new

* The job-corps or manpower corps has been included as a separate item in the Slave Lake region because of the importance it has in the overall plan. It is designed as an interior stage in the program to supply work during any waiting period for courses to start, to supply on-the-job training, and to supply work experience and work habit training. A person can enter this phase of the program directly from the introduction to the program stage, the program planning stage and vocational or other education stage and can leave the manpower corps to any of the education stages or the placement stage.

employee and employer to promote understanding between them, and perhaps further on-the-job training.

Supporting services is a 'catch-all' category which includes all the additional services needed to ensure that all the needs of the family and the applicant are met while going through any or all of the previous steps. The applicant may need a living allowance while taking counselling and training; he may need some monetary assistance in moving from one area to another to get a job; he may need some help in locating a place to live; the family may be having problems which require special counselling; day-care services may be required so that the wife can work or go to school; home visitor services may be needed to help the family adjust to new surroundings, new time schedules, new ways of shopping and cooking. There are many more services which may be needed and the program should be flexible enough to provide services as needed and not be restricted to a certain limited list. Individual cases may require services which have not been provided for ahead of time and the program should be flexible enough to adjust to the needs of the family. The essential point is that all services should be provided which would assist the applicant and his family to make a successful transition from his present position to a new position.

Job development covers a wide field involving the attracting of new industry to the developing of 'new careers'. Attracting new industry or exploiting resources which have not been exploited before is usually beyond the bounds of a manpower mobility program but probably should be undertaken in conjunction with such a program to make both programs more effective. All the requirements and implications of such economic development will not be discussed here, however the implication of a new careers program needs to be discussed.

New careers refers to developing openings for non-professional people in fields which have traditionally been restricted to professionally trained people with a minimum of education and training, can enter and work effectively at their level of training. New careers can include such activities as teacher aids, social work assistants, public health assistants, home visitors, etc. It is the intent of such a program that the professional person can become more effective because he has working with him, people who come from the same socio-economic level as his client, and these non-professional assistants do not have the same class bias or professional restrictions as the professional. Besides

increasing the effectiveness of the professional, this program provides non-professionals with access to work in field which were previously restricted and thus the person with little education now has additional opportunities for upward mobility.

The total comprehensive manpower program should be continually evaluated. The weak spots in the program need to be found and changes made which will strengthen them. The number of people making inquiries needs to be compared with the number who enter the program. The number entering the program needs to be compared with the number who successfully complete their individual programs (including maintaining themselves successfully in a job). When people leave the program, at what point do they leave and why? Are the people who complete the program satisfied with the results? Is the program flexible enough to take care of all the needs of people who apply for assistance? Is the co-operation and co-ordination among participating agencies effective and smooth? Are the needs of the applicant or the needs of the program paramount? All these questions need continued evaluation in order that the program is to gain maximum effectiveness. It is not simply the number of people who are processed and graduate that is of significance because the people who need this type of a program least will graduate the fastest. It is not just the number of people who graduate compared with the number who enter the program that is important because again the people who need the program least are most likely to be successful in it. The evaluation must consider the qualitative aspects of the people who enter and graduate. What did the program do for the type of applicants that it received and what did the program do to alleviate the total manpower problem in the area in which it is working? Did the program attract the people who need it most and did it satisfactorily improve their mobility?

Agencies Involved at the Present Time

Many of the services listed above are being provided at the present time by several different agencies. Some of the elements of a comprehensive manpower program are covered more fully than other elements and there are many gaps which must be filled. Canada manpower is one agency that is involved in several of the elements and probably provides a wider range of manpower services than any other agency. However, even when all agencies are considered together, they do not supply all of the elements and services necessary in a comprehensive manpower mobility program.

Recruitment is probably as neglected as any of the elements. Canada Manpower does advertising over various media and through public meetings for the various services which it provides and some agencies such as welfare and community development make referrals.

Each separate agency operating programs in the manpower mobility field has its own intake interview and the applicant must make a separate application for each service which he needs.

There are some parts of the evaluation stage which can be obtained from various agencies. Canada Manpower has some counselling services, the University of Alberta has some testing services and some private concerns also operate testing services. These again have not been integrated into a unit which will provide a wide range of counselling, testing and planning services for any individual.

Basic education, pre-vocational training, and skill training facilities and services are available from the Alberta Department of Education. Many of them are offered under the direction of the division of Vocational Education. Whenever Canada Manpower have a candidate for training, they purchase this training from the Department of Education. Most of the courses, however, are offered at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) in Edmonton. Opportunities to receive basic education courses are limited in northern Alberta outside of Edmonton. A wide variety of vocational and technical courses are offered at NAIT, but for most rural people, this means a move from their home area to Edmonton, at least for the period of their training. This means that either the husband must be separated from his family for relatively long periods of time or that the family must move together to Edmonton where housing is difficult. Successful adjustment is probably better if the family remains together and so either the family must move to the education or the education must move to the family.

Placement services are provided by Canada Manpower. This service is probably not as effective as it could be because employers and employees have not used it as fully as it could be used. More active canvassing of local employers and potential employers would probably improve this service.

There is little if any service provided in the follow-up element of a manpower program. This seems to be an area left to chance either because it has

not been defined as being within any agency's jurisdiction, or there has been too little staff, facility and funds to do any of this work.

The element of supporting services has been covered to a limited extent by the living and training allowances provided by Canada Manpower and the Alberta Vocational Center. Canada Manpower also supplies some travel grants for people moving from one area to another in search of work. However, this still leaves many gaps in such areas as family counselling, day-care services, housing, etc.

There is no manpower program which carries out a job development activity. Most industrial development activity is left to private enterprise although many towns and cities attempt to attract industry through industrial development co-ordinators or committees.

Building a Manpower Mobility Program

One of the most prominent facts which emerge from the above discussion is that many of the elements of a comprehensive manpower mobility program are already supplied by various government departments and agencies. However, when a person sets out to obtain assistance, he must go to several departments, fill out several application forms, and attempt to meet differing qualifications if he is to build a program which will suit his particular needs. The problem arises because government agencies tend to be assigned responsibility for programs and not for people. When someone calls for services which do not directly fall under the program of a particular department or agency, he is told that it is outside of their jurisdiction and he should try x department. Two or three experiences of this nature discourages the applicant and he decides that the government is giving him the 'run-around'. Only those who are skilled in talking with people, have some understanding of the workings of government, and are highly motivated to change their situation, or to 'get something for nothing' are able to survive all of the intricacies of the various government agencies. These are not the people who need the services most and neither are they the people for which the various government programs were designed.

This problem can be solved by having one agency responsible for the people who enter a comprehensive manpower program. This agency would be knowledgeable about all the services offered by any government, university or private agency and could call on them in any specific situation as the need arises. This

agency would then monitor the progress of any applicant and co-ordinate the programs of any agency in relation to each applicant. In this way, each applicant can have a program which is tailored to his individual needs. The problem of filling out a multiplicity of application forms could also be solved by this agency if one form could be developed which would be suitable for all agencies and the central agency could, in the intake interview, accumulate all of the necessary information for all of the potential co-operating agencies.

There are several services in a comprehensive manpower program which are not available or which could be improved. In the recruitment area, much more could be done with community leaders, community meetings, personal contact and referrals. The agencies working with people who could benefit from a manpower mobility program could refer more people. This would be a simple process if there was one agency responsible for all the people in the program because then the referring agency would not need to know all the details of each program and the requirements to qualify. Also, agencies would be more likely to refer people if they knew that there would be some follow-up on the referral.

Basic Education, pre-vocational training and skill training can be carried out by the present agencies, but there may be some need to expand some services in rural areas and some modifications to programs may be necessary as more details on special needs and problems become available.

Placement services can continue to be provided by Canada Manpower although some expansion in terms of detailed needs of local employers and projections as to future possibilities.

Supporting services can be supplied from a wide variety of agencies. Some supporting services such as living and transportation allowances are already available under Canada Manpower and the Alberta Department of Education. There are some family counselling services which are available but many rural areas lack such services. In areas which have preventive social service programs, this type of service could be started under the Preventive Social Service Act, but many rural areas do not have such programs and either they should be encouraged to start such a program or some other agency must handle this service. Day-care services could also come under this type of agency, but again problems arise where no such agency exists.

Housing is always a problem when people move from one area to another. In many cities, adequate housing is difficult to find and often when people on a manpower mobility program move to cities, it is only for the period of their training and so buying a house is not feasible. Perhaps some housing could be built under the jurisdiction of C.M.H.C. which would be restricted to people on training programs and could be rented at a rate which people receiving training allowances could afford. People coming into cities also need assistance in looking for rental housing and perhaps this assistance could be given through the home visitors.

The Home Visitors program is a supporting service but it also falls under the heading of job development. It is one part of a number of programs called 'new careers'. The home visitor provides individual help and advice to people and the home visitor is often a neighbour or a friend from the same community or the receiving community who has made successful adjustments to the demands of today's society. Other 'new careers' programs are public health aids, teaching aids and social work aids. These could be administered by the various specialty agencies involved. These 'new careers' programs should provide additional work and mobility opportunities for people with little formal education.

Each agency involved in the manpower mobility program should conduct its own ongoing evaluation and assess its own activities. However, the overall evaluation should be done by some outside and impartial agency such as a university or the H.R.R.C.

The largest gap in the present services available for a comprehensive manpower program is a method of follow-up on every person who displays an interest in the program. This function could readily be performed by general counsellors under the H.R.D.A. or the Department of Social Development. These counsellors need to follow any applicant from the time of first interest, until successful adjustment to a permanent employment situation is achieved by the applicant and his family. The length of time involved will vary with each individual or family.

The following chart illustrates the relationship of all elements of the program to each other and the possible routes through the program for individual applicants.

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